

where the King's messenger lay, and shot arrows through his window. The protection afforded to the delinquents by the Chancellor had lent a serious aspect to the silly quarrel, and had so embittered the Court against the University¹ that now, in their hour of need, the academicians stood without a friend. Moreover, the Court was swayed by strong disapproval of Wycliffe's later doctrines. There is no greater mistake than to suppose that Richard and his counsellors were at this time strongly infected with heresy. They were faithful sons of the Church, and did her yeoman's service ; for if they had chosen to stand aside, the Bishops, unaided, could never have purged Oxford. But on July 13, the King sent down to Rygge two peremptory mandates. One ordered him to restore Crumpe to his place in the schools, the other to banish Wycliffe, Hereford, Repyngton and John Aston from the University and town of Oxford within seven days. Contumacy would only lead to the forfeiture of all privileges held from the Crown. There was nothing left but to obey.²

Meanwhile, in London, the council of churchmen continued its sessions in the Blackfriars' convent. Having dealt with the Chancellor, they proceeded to deal with the principal heretics of Oxford, always excepting Wycliffe himself. John Aston, the most contumacious of all, was brought up for trial. He was destined to become one of the chief Lollard missionaries, and already enjoyed great popularity. The citizens of London broke into the convent during the trial, and the interruptions of the audience lent courage to the prisoner. Aston refused to subscribe to the doctrine of Tran-substantiation, declaring that the matter passed his understanding, although his desire was to believe what Scripture and the Church taught. These words, though apparently innocent, were well enough understood by the hearers; for Wycliffe argued, not only that Scripture was on his side, but that the Church had, for more than a thousand years, believed as he did on the question of the Eucharist. Courtenay told Aston to speak in Latin, but he only went on louder than before in English, for he was appealing to the London citizens rather than to the Bishops. He addressed his judges with

¹ *Cont. Eulog.* (E. S.), 348-9 ; Wilkins, iii. 137. ^a *Fasc. Z.*, 311-7,